



Australian Bureau of Statistics

6224.0.55.001 - Labour Force, Australia: Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families, September 2008

Previous ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 16/10/2008

Summary

Main Features

20/10/2008 Low Level Correction to fix table title names text in historical Datacubes and a text error in a reference on the Main Features. The data in *Labour Force, Australia: Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families, September 2008* (cat. no. 6224.0.55.001) is not affected.

In September 2008, an improved method for calculating families estimates was introduced. As a result, information from the following groups will now contribute to the family estimates published in datacubes FA1 to FA5:

- households containing permanent members of the Australian defence forces
- households containing usual residents of private dwellings who fail to meet LFS selection rules (for example, because they are away from their usual residence for more than six weeks) and
- households which did not fully respond to the survey (as long as all demographic and family type variables are available).

Detailed information on the improved method is provided in Information Paper: Improvements to Family Estimates from the Labour Force Survey (cat. no. 6224.0.55.002).

Additionally, the frequency of the release has changed from annual release to monthly.

Since these products are based on the same data as the **Labour Force, Australia** (cat. no. 6202.0) product set, the **6202.0 Labour Force, Australia Main Features** are relevant to both releases.

About this Release

The monthly datacubes contain detailed information about labour force status and other characteristics of families using original data collected in the Labour Force Survey.

Explanatory Notes

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The **Labour Force, Australia: Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families** (cat. no. 6224.0.55.001) product set is a monthly component of the Labour Force Survey series of products and includes detailed data not contained in the monthly **Labour Force, Australia** (cat. no. 6202.0) product set. Prior to September 2008 this series was released as an annual series.

Since these products are based on the same data as the **Labour Force, Australia** (cat. no. 6202.0) publication, the 6202.0 Labour Force, Australia Explanatory Notes are relevant to both releases.

Quality Declaration - Summary

INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Labour Force statistics are compiled from the Labour Force Survey which is conducted each month throughout Australia as part of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) household survey program. For information on the institutional environment of the ABS, including the legislative obligations of the ABS, financing and governance arrangements, and mechanisms for scrutiny of ABS operations, please see ABS Institutional Environment.

RELEVANCE

The Labour Force Survey provides monthly information about the labour market activity of Australia's resident civilian population aged 15 years and over. The Labour Force Survey is designed to primarily provide estimates of employment and unemployment for the whole of Australia and, secondarily, for each state and territory.

TIMELINESS

The Labour Force Survey interviews are generally conducted during the two weeks beginning on the Sunday between the 5th and 11th of each month. The information obtained relates to the week before the interview (i.e. the reference week). Each year, to deal with operational difficulties involved with collecting and processing the Labour Force Survey around the Christmas and New Year holiday period, interviews for December start four weeks after November interviews start, and January interviews start five weeks after December interviews start. As a result, January interviewing may commence as early as the 7th or as late as the 13th, depending on the year. Occasionally, circumstances that present significant operational difficulties for survey collection can result in a change to the normal pattern for the start of interviewing.

Key estimates from the Labour Force Survey are published in two stages. *Labour Force, Australia* (cat. no. 6202.0) and *Labour Force, Australia, Spreadsheets* (cat. no. 6202.0.55.001) are the first release. These data are released 32 days after the commencement of enumeration for the month, with the exception of estimates for December which are published 39 days after the commencement of enumeration.

Detailed data which were not part of the first release from the Labour Force Survey are

published in *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery* (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001) and *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly* (cat. no. 6291.0.55.003), which are released one week after the initial release.

ACCURACY

The Labour Force Survey is based on a sample of private dwellings (approximately 22,800 houses, flats etc) and non-private dwellings, such as hotels and motels. The sample covers about 0.24% of the Australian Population. The Labour Force Survey is designed primarily to provide estimates of key labour force statistics for the whole of Australia and, secondarily, for each state and territory.

Two types of error are possible in an estimate based on a sample survey: non-sampling error and sampling error.

Non-sampling error arises from inaccuracies in collecting, recording and processing the data. Every effort is made to minimise reporting error by the careful design of questionnaires, intensive training and supervision of interviewers, and efficient data processing procedures. Non-sampling error also arises because information cannot be obtained from all persons selected in the survey. The Labour Force Survey receives a high level of cooperation, with an average response rate for the last year being 97%.

Sampling error occurs because a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed. One measure of the likely difference resulting from not including all dwellings in the survey is given by the standard error. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included in the survey, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

Standard errors of key estimates and movements since the previous month are available in *Labour Force, Australia* (cat. no. 6202.0). The standard error of other estimates and movements may be calculated by using the spreadsheet contained in *Labour Force Survey Standard Errors, Data Cube* (cat. no. 6298.0).

COHERENCE

The ABS has been conducting the Labour Force Survey each month since February 1978. While seeking to provide a high degree of consistency and comparability over time by minimising changes to the survey, sound survey practice requires careful and continuing maintenance and development to maintain the integrity of the data and the efficiency of the collection.

The changes which have been made to the Labour Force Survey have included changes in sampling methods, estimation methods, concepts, data item definitions, classifications, and time series analysis techniques. In introducing these changes the ABS has generally revised previous estimates to ensure consistency and coherence with current estimates. For a full list of changes made to the Labour Force Survey see *Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods* (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001) Table 20.2.

INTERPRETABILITY

The key estimates from the Labour Force Survey are available as original, seasonally adjusted and trend series. Seasonal adjustment is a means of removing the effects of normal seasonal variation from the series so other influences on the series can be more clearly recognised. Seasonal adjustment does not aim to remove the irregular influences which may be present and therefore month-to-month movements may not be reliable indicators of underlying behaviour. To assist in interpreting the underlying behaviour, the ABS produces the trend series by smoothing the seasonally adjusted series to reduce the impact of the irregular component. For further information, see *A Guide to Interpreting Time Series - Monitoring Trends* (cat. no. 1349.0).

Further information on the terminology and other technical aspects associated with statistics from the Labour Force Survey can be found in the publication *Labour Force, Australia* (cat. no. 6202.0), which contains detailed Explanatory Notes, Standard Error information and a Glossary.

ACCESSIBILITY

Please see the Related Information tab for the list of products that are available from this collection.

Data Cubes (I-Note) - Data Cubes

20/10/2008 Low Level Correction to fix table title names text in historical Datacubes.

The Table titles of the following historical datacubes have been amended to correct the date text from 2008 to 2004. The data in the Datacubes released in *Labour Force, Australia: Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families, September 2008* (cat. no. 6224.0.55.001) is not affected.

FA1_jun94 - Historical Families by Family type, State, Sex, Number of family members to June 2004

FA2_jun94 - Historical Families by Family type, Sex, Children, Labour force status to June 2004

FA3_jun94 - Historical Families by Family type, Sex, State, Dependents, Labour force status to June 2004

FA4_jun94 - Historical Families by Couple and One Parent family type, Age of parents, Age group of dependents, Labour force status to June 2004

FA5_jun94 - Historical Families by Couple and One Parent family type, Duration of unemployment, Age group of dependents, Labour force status to June 2004